

The Spokesman

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AKALI DEMAND FOR AUTONOMY BEING MISCONSTRUED

More Financial Powers Sought By Many Parties And States

In criticising the Akali demand for an increased dose of autonomy, Punjab Chief Minister Darbara Singh was on a week wicket. He also sought to give a new political colouring to an otherwise just cause.

Of course, he did concede that there was great validity in the states having more control over their own financial strings. He also said that if the states needed more funds from the centre for their development, "the doors are open for talks".

There are two aspects of demand for more autonomy to the states. One is political and the other economic.

Ours is a federal structure. During the freedom struggle, all important Congress leaders had been promising full autonomy to the states, with the centre keeping only a handful of subjects. But when the constitution of free India was being drafted, the Hindu lobby, which was predominant both in numbers and influence, insisted on a strong centre. The result is that the states, as West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu said this week, "have been reduced to mere municipalities". The jibe is that if a chief minister has to sneeze, he has to seek New Delhi's permission.

From this is born the crescendo for more powers to the states. Shiromani Akali Dal's now-famous Anandpur Sahib Resolution wanted the centre to keep only defence, external affairs, communications and currency and transfer all other subjects to the states. This plea has been taken up by many other parties and states. At least four state assemblies have passed resolutions upholding the above stand. The Akalis have, however, put their resolution in cold storage for the time being.

It is naive to argue that demand for political autonomy will encourage secessionist tendencies in the country. Rather,

the reverse will be more true. Discontent, now simmering in the various states over the centre controlling everything, is not a healthy sign. It is bound to burst one day. Thus, the remedy lies in satisfying the states' urge for more say in their own affairs.

The planning commission controls every development work.

Without its consent, no project, however minor, can be initiated, much less consummated.

Akalis want that each state should be allowed to plan its development with its own resources without any restraints from the centre. Where lies the mischief in this plea? And why must the centre stand in the way of a state marshalling its funds, skilled manpower and energy for projects which it considers more beneficial for its populace?

In fact, Punjab is being punished for generating prosperity within its confines. It is being given less central assistance than its due under the argument that it is miles ahead of other states in many spheres and the latter need more help. This amounts to rewarding lethargy and indolence.

Now that we have Congress (I) ministries at the centre and in Punjab, Sardar Darbara Singh would be well advised to get the step-motherly treatment to the state ended.

Government Dilly-Dallying On Minorities Commission's Recommendations

Sikh Grouses Remain Untackled And Unredressed

The central government has done precious little to implement two most important recommendations of the Minorities Commission whose report for 1978 was placed in parliament recently. These were:

First, steps should be taken to discourage the organisation of para-military training camps along communal lines.

Secondly, all textbooks, in schools and colleges which tend to foster in young minds a sense of communal hatred or hostility, must be replaced.

Replying to the debate on demands for his ministry in the Lok Sabha this week, Union Home Minister Zail Singh left the first suggestion to the discretion of the states under the plea that the subject fell within their province. The minorities commission's dart was aimed at the "shakhas" organised by the RSS, which are an anachronism in secular India. Though the requisite amendment to the Indian Penal Code was made in 1972, the states have done little or nothing to give effect to it. Only two states, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala, have

banned RSS "shakhas" in public places. Others have turned the proverbial Nelson's eye to this menace.

This virus is borne out by the increase in communal violence in 1979 when 384 incidents took place with 261 casualties.

Many would agree with the Giani that RSS should be given more time to mend its ways before the government could think of banning it. He even sought the help of Hindu liberals like Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee in persuading the RSS to change its thinking and mode of working. But a tiger can change its spots but not the RSS men. They are dyed too deep in the utopian slogans of "Hindu, Hindi and Hindustan". At one time they argued that all Indians, irrespective of their faith, were "Hindus". But when the question arose of admitting non-Hindus into the RSS membership, the

bosses shied away, declaring that the matter needed "closer scrutiny".

On the second recommendation, union government's memorandum of action is not as purposive or forthright as it could be. It invokes the all-party consensus reached at the National Integration Council in 1968 and refers soporifically to some steps taken by various central agencies on the vetting of controversial textbooks.

Granted, the task of vetting and rewriting textbooks bristles with difficulties. It is the domain of academics and bureaucrats. But the state must see to it that the prescribed books do not poison the minds of children against people belonging to communities other than their own. The government must say "not this one" even when it does not want to produce officially-inspired literature of any kind.

Sikhs have been protesting against many distortions in textbooks in Maharashtra.

(Continued on next page)

Government Grilled Over Crime Situation

Dr. Rajinder Kaur, Member Rajya Sabha recently took part in the calling attention motion in the House towards atrocities committed on women. Here is summary of her speech:

"My issue is the same over which a hue and cry is raised at one place or the other every day, but still the circumstances remain unchanged. In Baghpat, a woman had been raped. The House had hardly finished discussion on it, when we received a report from Madhya Pradesh. Then again, in Gonda, in U.P., another incident had taken place where some Harijan women had been raped. The State Government of M.P. suspended the constables and some other Police Officers and sent them to the lines.

"In Baghpat, in U.P. where another incident had taken place, those constables who had been responsible for the killing of three persons, had been given Rs. 1,000/each as a reward. At the same time, the District Magistrate and the I.G. of police, Meerut have said that the persons killed were dacoits, and because they were dacoits, whatever action was taken by the Government was right.

"The Home Minister, Giani Zail Singh, made a statement that he does not want to comment, because the case was sub-judice. Then how is it fair that the U.P. Government gives rewards to the policemen and makes a statement which may prejudice the judicial enquiry and which gives an impression before hand that those who had been killed had been guilty and those persons who had killed them are nice people. Why are these things not being checked? For this either the police or some

(Continued from previous page)

Madhya Pradesh and other states about their religion and their Gurus. But so far no remedial measures have been taken. In such matters, the centre must put its foot down and bring the erring states to the right path.

The value of recommendations made by the minorities commission is still a big question mark. The Janta ministry, under Mr Morarji Desai, had said that its recommendations would be "binding on the government". Mrs Gandhi's government has yet to make its views known.

Unfortunately, the commission itself has been plagued with dissensions. Two of its members, Mr V.V. John and Dr Aloo Dastur, have resigned because they could not see eye to eye with the chairman, Mr Justice M.R.A. Ansari.

Though Sikhs are represented on it by former Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh, their grievances, which are legion in number, remain untackled and unredressed, though they are the second most important minority in the country.

corrupt politicians are responsible. What is the reason that in Madhya Pradesh, the policemen responsible had been punished, but in U.P., no action had been taken?

"Some times, I feel that as compared to British regime, the dignity of women in independent India, is not safe. Earlier, women could travel safely in trains wearing gold ornaments. But today even the honour of women is not safe in trains.

"The Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, is a lady. And if she is not able to defend the honour of women, I do not know whether she deserves to be the Prime Minister. She cannot protect the honour of women. We call ourselves an independent country but we are not able to protect the rights and honour of women".

Mystery About A Sikh's Disappearance In Kanpur

The family members and close relatives of a missing railway employee, Sardar Tirath Singh Mehta, working at the Kanpur Central Railway Station in the SCA office, are passing through moments of great tensions because he is missing since June 21, 1980.

Sardar Mehta left his residence for routine office work in the morning and was seen last working in his office till mid-day. Thereafter his whereabouts are not known.

The family has reported the matter to the Kanpur police but they have taken no action so far.

Sudden disappearance of Sardar Mehta is shrouded in mystery and is riddle which inspite of lapse of so many days remains unsolved.

The close associates of Sardar Mehta suspect foul play on the part of his superior officers in the office. It is alleged that a gang of goondas has been

hired to get rid of him.

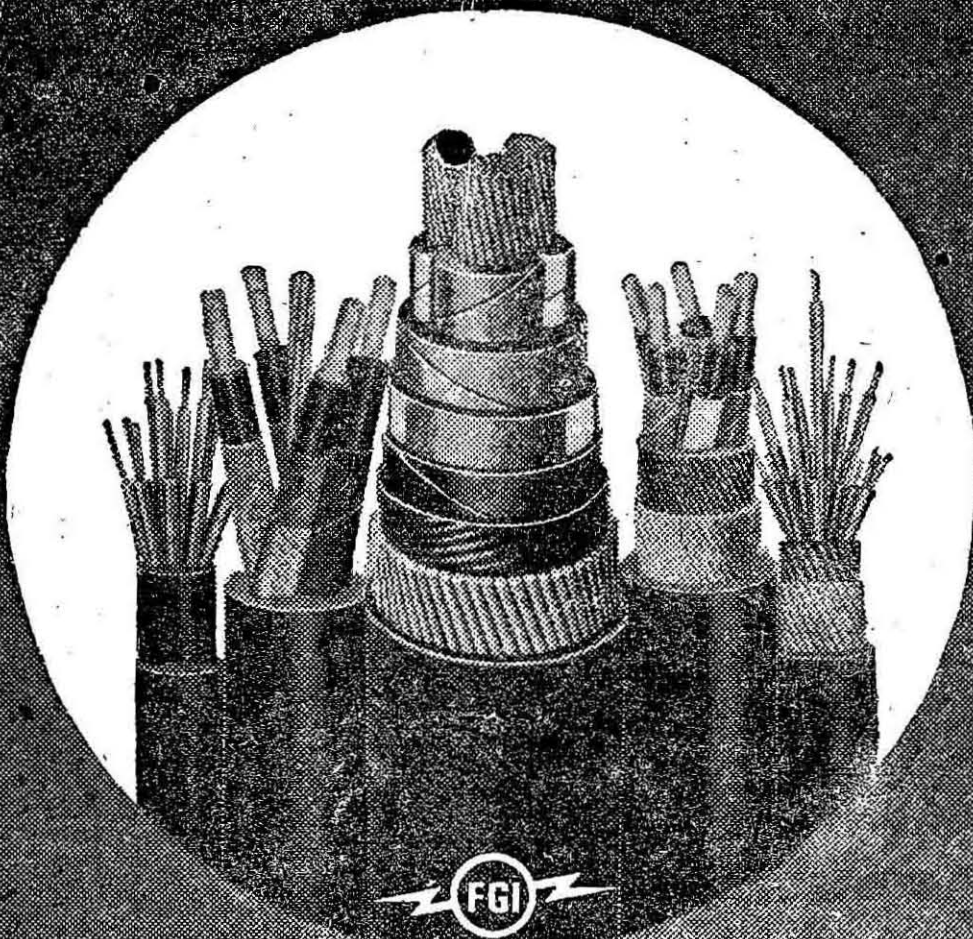
Another theory is that he might have been kidnapped with some ulterior motives and his relatives believe that unless the culprits are taken in police custody, it will not be possible to trace Sardar Mehta, dead or alive.

Sardar Mehta is a close relative of Sardar Tirath Singh Sobti, a former Chairman of Agriculture Marketing Board of Punjab.

It is suspected that some erstwhile pro-Janta elements in the Railway have hatched a fool-proof conspiracy and got rid of him. It is alleged that the police personnel in Kanpur City are dominated by the persons with R.S.S. leanings.

Unless the case is handed over to the CBI, the mystery of Sardar Mehta's disappearance will remain unsolved and faith of citizens in government will not be restored.

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A THOUGHT FROM GURBANI

Were my floor embedded with diamonds and rubies,
On the floor a couch likewise with rubies inlaid
And on the couch a jewel-bedecked damsel
Sportive and wanton.
Lord, let not mine eyes be deceived by these
That I fail to recall Thy Name.

—Guru Nanak

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DANGEROUS TRENDS

Very disturbing news has been received from Punjab about the alarming increase in usage of liquor, opium, poppy husk and narcotic drugs. During the quarter ended June 30, consumption of country liquor went up by nearly 45 percent as compared to the corresponding period last year; the total intake, according to official figures, was 38.23 lakh proof litres; this works out to about 12 lakh proof litres per month or about 42,000 proof litres per day. To this must be added Indian-made foreign liquors like whisky, brandy, beer and rum as well as illicit liquor which has become almost a cottage industry in the state. According to a recent survey, mean annual consumption per drinker in Punjab is 10 litres of absolute alcohol; the comparative figures for many European countries are much less; for instance, it is 9.95 litres of absolute alcohol in Sweden, 8.62 in the Netherlands, 8.55 in Poland, 7.94 in Finland and 6.96 in Norway. All these countries are much colder than Punjab and people need liquor to provide the much-needed heat during snowy winters. Of course, Britain, Denmark and Ireland are ahead of Punjab in this respect. On an average, 50 percent Punjabis take liquor and spend Rs 280 crores per year on drinks.

Opinion, however, differs on the causes for this sudden spurt in liquor consumption. Some ascribe it to the rise in agricultural income in the countryside; others feel it is some sort of a contagion Punjabis have got from their relatives living abroad; whenever these uncles and brothers from across the seas visit their homes, they not only consume good amount of liquor themselves but also introduce their local relatives to the "bliss" it gives; the locals, later on, in the absence of foreign liquor, go on their mental safaris with the country and illicit liquor.

Smuggling of poppy husk and opium into Punjab from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan continues unabated. The smuggler and the seller remain the same; only the recipient of the hush money has changed with the advent of the new government. Lakhs of rupees change hands in this underworld trade every month. The wholesale price of poppy husk is only Rs 2 per kilo, which is paid to the producer, but the retailer gets it at Rs 12; the balance of Rs 10 is the profit and the hush money. The husk is brought into Punjab concealed in trucks. Though police have seized some quantities here and there, many top smugglers have not been touched because they enjoy political patronage.

Blatant Discrimination

Despite representations by the Indian government, Saudi Arabia continues to practise gross discrimination against Sikhs. Admittedly, this kingdom, which prides itself on being the birth-place of Islam, as both Mecca and Medina lie in it, has every right to proclaim itself as a purely Muslim state and enforce Koranic laws, though with the passage of time they now look to be too harsh and medieval. But the Koran itself lays down: Unto me my religion, unto you your religion. In other words, Islam does not frown upon other religions, though it pleads for its own spread through its faithfuls.

Saudi Arabia, enriched beyond measure with the inflow of petro-dollars, is currently engaged in massive construction works. Since it does not possess either the technical knowhow or skilled people, it has to import experts from other countries. Contracts have also been awarded to American and European concerns whose staff is all Christians. As Asian labour is cheaper, they tend to employ, among others, Indians also. Not all of them are Muslim; some are Hindu while others are Christians. But, strangely, King Khaled's government has chosen to ban the entry of Sikhs alone. Why, it has never been explained with either rationality or convincing arguments.

This ban is not confined to Sikhs with Indian passports. It is applied to Sikhs everywhere, even though some of them have acquired nationality of other countries. The latest example is

of Sardar Kawaljit Singh Viridi who is an American citizen and holds a US passport. He is an architect and was assigned to a job in Saudi Arabia by his firm. The Saudi Arabian consulate in New York granted him an entry visa valid for eight months, though his stay was scheduled for three months only. There could not be any case of mistaken identity, as his passport had his photo showing him as a full-fledged Sikh, with beard and turban. But when he flew into Dahrn, he was not allowed entry. The airport officials cancelled his visa, held him in isolation for 12 hours as if he was a plague, and then sent him out by a flight to Bombay. This shows that full-fledged Sikhs have become an anathema to Saudi Arabia.

Many reasons are adduced to this discrimination. Some say Sikhs in Saudi Arabia once installed a loud-speaker while celebrating Guru Nanak's birthday, and the authorities did not like this relay of hymns from another religion. Still another reason is said to be the jealousy of non-Sikhs because Sikhs work with more devotion and expertise. Whatever may be the reasons, this discrimination against one community must be ended. If Christians and adherents of other faiths can live and work in Saudi Arabia, why not Sikhs? After all, Guru Nanak, founder of the faith, was as much revered by Muslims as by Sikhs and Hindus, and the Holy Granth has compositions from many Muslim saints.

A survey conducted by Patiala Medical College showed that 35 percent of male adults in Punjab use opium, and 67 percent of them have become addicts. About 75 percent of opium-users started taking the narcotic to overcome fatigue during the harvesting season; other 10 percent began taking the stuff for fun or for satisfying their curiosity about its effects; the remaining 15 percent acquired the habit for varied reasons. Since opium is not freely available, the smuggled stuff is sold at a high price; spurious substitutes are also produced in the underworld.

The college-going youth have fallen prey to drugs like hashish and other sedatives, mostly because they do not want to lag behind their "modern" but spoiled brethern in other countries.

All this calls for a mass campaign by social workers and government. Any programme must include a combination of measures aimed at limiting the availability of alcohol, both licit and illicit, and eliminating opium, poppy husk and drugs as well as a well-planned educative approach based on socio-cultural and personal factors. But this would require extensive and imaginative multi-disciplinary planning and action rather than blanket legal controls or mere prohibition propaganda.

An Episode Of Sikh History

By : Lt. Col. Gulcharan Singh (Retd.)

Kasur, lying between Lahore and Ferozepore, was one of the famous cities of the Panjab during the 18th Century. This ancient rival of Lahore, a stronghold of the Pathans, was then ruled by Nizam-ud-din. The Nawab of Kasur, Nizam-ud-din Khan was a rival of Ranjit Singh in his struggle for supremacy in the Punjab. Ranjit Singh having been able to establish supremacy over all the struggling allied forces, invaded Kasur and exacted tribute from the Nawab.

Nizam-ud-din Khan was of the Khweshgi section of the Mahammadzais commonly known as "Kasuria Pathans". They had marched with the Babar's armies from Peshawar and, later, settled south of Lahore astride the Satluj, where they were granted lands in *jagir* by Babar for their services rendered to him. (*The Pathans*, Olaf Caroe, P. 164). In 1797 and 1798, when Shan Zaman invaded the Punjab, he wanted to use the Nawab, as an intermediary between himself and the Sikh Chiefs of the time. Nizam-ud-din himself was keen to establish Afghan rule in the Punjab. He offered assistance to Shah Zaman if the latter could let him hold the Punjab in his name for which he would pay a yearly tribute of five lakhs of rupees. This offer was rejected by the Shah. Shah Zaman returned to Kabul disappointed through lack of co-operation by the Nawab.

Nizam-ud-din wished to take advantage of the mutual quarrels of the Bhangi rulers of Lahore, and occupy the city himself. But the scheme leaked out prematurely and the Nawab could not fulfil his desire.

In 1801, the Nawab of Kasur and Sahib Singh Bhangi, Chief of Gujrat, revolted. To deal with the rebels, Ranjit Singh himself proceeded against the Bhangi Chief, and despatched Sardar Fateh Singh Kalianwala to deal with the Nawab of Kasur. The Nawab on hearing the march of the Lahore forces made preparations to defend himself. The two forces met outside the city of Kasur and a severe battle took place. The Afghan stand did not last even a full day and it soon crumbled. They retreated inside the fort, where, also, they were mauled. When the fort was about to fall the Nawab sued for peace; he surrendered himself and accepted the following terms offered to him by the Sardar:—

- (a) The Nawab was to pay tribute and also acknowledge himself as a feudatory of the Maharaja.
- (b) The Nawab was to send his brother, Kutab-ud-din, to

Lahore to pay his respects to the Maharaja.

- (c) The Nawab was to furnish a certain number of troops to the Lahore ruler.
- (d) Two Pathan chiefs were to be sent to Lahore as hostages. (They were, however, later presented with *khillats* and allowed to return to Kasur).

In 1802, Nizam-ud-din disregarded the treaty; and, having collected a sufficiently large force, pillaged two villages which fell in the Lahore jurisdiction; he was planning for further infiltration, when it came to the knowledge of Ranjit Singh, who, now determined to severely deal with the Nawab, himself marched towards Kasur. He, also, sent for Fateh Singh Ahluwalia who with his force joined the Maharaja in this venture. The two contestants met on the open ground and a fierce battle took place. Both Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh distinguished themselves by acts of great personal valour.

The Pathans, being no match for the Lahore troops, retired into the fort. Violent battle, accompanied with a great slaughter on both sides, once again took place. However, the fort surrendered to the young Maharaja. The buildings in the Kasur city were formed in blocks each forming a separate *abadi*; when fighting in the built-up areas took place, these *abadis* were reduced one by one without much difficulty.

The Nawab seeing his hopeless position presented himself before the victor "with every sign of humility". He promised submission and paid a large sum as *nazrana* plus the expenses of the

war to the Maharaja, who reinstated the Nawab.

In the same year (1802) Nizam-ud-din was assassinated by his brother-in-law whose *jagir* had earlier been confiscated by the former. Kutab-ud-din, who is alleged to have had a hand in this murder, succeeded his deceased brother. Ranjit Singh, taking advantage of the situation, invaded Kasur for the fourth time. In this expedition also, the Maharaja was accompanied by his friend Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. Kutab-ud-din, on his side, had strengthened his defences and had also laid ambushes throughout the country to hinder the invader's advance which he was able to delay. For about seven months the expedition carried on. Seeing no other way out, the Maharaja cut off the supplies for the besieged and compelled the Nawab to surrender. The Maharaja accepted a huge sum as a penalty for the rebellion and once again withdrew from the Kasur territory.

The incorrigible Nawab had again started creating trouble. He persecuted Sikhs and Hindus in his area, and collected a force of *ghazis* with the intention of creating trouble for the Maharaja. He started preparing for war in which he was being secretly helped by Muzaffar Khan of Multan; he had all the small forts in his territory stocked with ammunition and provisions. Faqir Aziz-ud-din, the foreign minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who had been sent to the Nawab to ascertain the facts, was insulted by the latter for being in the service of the Sikh ruler. The Maharaja was infuriated on this treatment meted out to his ambassador and for

disregarding the recently concluded treaty.

In 1807, therefore, after the capture of Pasrur, the Maharaja, who was anxious to remove this thorn (of Kasur) from his side and strengthen his position decided to invade Kasur. It was too near his capital to be left in the hands of the people hostile to him, "nor was he, perhaps, without a feeling that the reduction of large colony of Pathans, and the annexation of the mythological rival of Lahore, would add to his own merit and importance. So, once again the Maharaja diverted his attention towards Kasur, and, no sooner the preparations were ready than he, accompanied by General Kalianwala, invaded Kasur on 10th February, 1807. The Nawab also came out with his force.

Two fierce battles were fought, and in both the Pathan colonists were defeated. The opening bout had taken place between the fanatics on either side, the *Nihangs* and the *Ghazis*, when the former pushed back the latter. The Nawab with his force retired to the fort which had already been stored with provisions, and arms and ammunition. The invaders besieged the fort and cut off all communications with the outside world. The siege lasted for about a month during which the guns pounded the fort walls. The whole surrounding area was laid waste. When the besieged had consumed their provisions started living on the flesh of horses and cattle. One night, western wall of the fort was mined by the Sikh miners, and by the time it was dawn the wall collapsed. Through this breach rushed in the Sikh force and a hand to hand fighting took place. But the victory was for the Sikhs who then occupied the fort. Kutab-ud-din was arrested while escaping and was brought before the Maharaja who, on the Nawab's begging, pardoned the latter and granted him a *jagir* at Mamdot and the surrounding area, east of the Satluj; here he built the new town of Jalalabad. In return, the Nawab promised to provide the Maharaja with 100 horsemen, whenever required by the latter. The territory of Kasur was annexed to the Lahore Darbar. The acquisition of Kasur, the mythological rival of Lahore, removed the Pathan colony and increased the popularity of the Maharaja among the people of the Punjab. The fall of Kasur, brought the Maharaja a huge property consisting of jewels, rich stuff and fabrics, shawls, horses and camels. The Maharaja, then, returned to Lahore and celebrated the victory in his usual way on a grand scale. Some of the rich stuff was sent as an offering to the Golden Temple at Amritsar.



I lay on my bed of illness and I asked myself:

"What is the deepest need of my heart?" And I answered: "Spiritual peace".

Then I thought of the great scriptures of the Hindu faith, each sounding the note of peace, "Om shanti, shanti, shanti, the great mantra of the Rishis. And my thoughts travelled to another scripture written by a saint, the scripture named *Sukhmani*. The word means "the jewel of *Sukha*, or peace". *Sukhmani* is a "Song of Peace".

A great message this—of Guru Arjan Dev—which has not received the attention it deserves. The age we live in cries, on the political plane for peace of the nations. But life transcends politics. Above the political plane is another, the plane of communion. And there the deepest yearning of the heart of men is for spiritual peace.

On of the great voices of this *sukha*, peace, spiritual peace, is Guru Arjan Dev who passed away in the 16th century. He died a martyr's death, he died with the great word, "Nanak" (his Master) and peace", on his lips. He died a martyr, a witness to the Life in the Spirit! He was, perhaps, the greatest man of his century, and these four centuries more he has been one of the dominant figures in the history of India.

His influence on the life of the Sikhs has been tremendous. He is a many sided figure. Some times, we see him as an organiser of the Sikh Community, giving them a Scripture, *Granth Sahib*, and a temple, the inspired author of the *Sukhmani*. Again, as a preacher of a school of spirituality in which the Hindu embraces the Muslim as his brother, a school of which Guru Nanak became a Prophet when in Kartarpur he greeted the Khalifa and the Pathan as comrades, dining in the same kitchen and worshipping in the same Temple, the one Eternal *Akala Purukha* named at once as *Sat* and *Allah* or *Khuda*.

I am not a Sikh. But in my heart is an aspiration that Sikh scholars and *bhaktas* may be banded together (1) to present in a book, a whole and integral picture of Guru Arjan Dev, and (2) to translate into English and some of the important Indian vernaculars Guru Arjan Dev's *Sukhmani*, a Scripture which has, I believe, a world-value.

Sukhmani is the most popular and widely chanted hymn. It is joy infinite which is beyond the span of words; for words are volatile, but the joy which emanates from this Song of songs is eternal.

SUKHMANI

The Song Of Eternal Peace

By : Sadhu T.L. Vaswani

The *Sukhmani* should have a special appeal to the nations which, broken and bleeding today cry for peace, which is not a political parchment but is born of the Heart of Man.

Guru Arjan had the courage to say "no" to an emperor. Guru Arjan was at once bold and gentle. His *Sukhmani* is a stream of sweetness and joy. The *Sukhmani* has the vitality of a soul strong in the strength of sacrifice. The *Sukhmani* has the spiritual peace which the Rishis felt in the silence of the *ashrama* life.

Guru Arjan was a man of interior solitude and prayer, and he was a man of heroic action. In his life was the union of action and contemplation. In this union is the true integral life of saints. Reading the *Sukhmani* and meditation on it, we may hope for a return to the true integral spirit, which modern India has, alas! forsaken. The teaching of Guru Arjan should receive a wide dissemination in these days, for the *Sukhmani* indicates how activity may be nourished by interior life, and how social life may bear fruit not merely in improvements in service of one's own community but in true love for all communities.

St. John of the Cross speaks of the "Dark Night" in which is revealed the Light of the Spirit. Such a "Dark Night" we see in the life of Guru Arjan Dev, when he is seated on an iron plate, hot flames burning underneath and the great Guru reciting the word of his Guru, of Nanak Dev, and repeating the words: "In Thy Will is the peace of my soul!" Guru Arjan Dev of the Dark Night is a symbol, to my mind, of the Khalsa Community, enduring, suffering, bearing witness to God in the trials of life, glorifying the Gurus. Guru Arjan Dev shares his agony with Sikh martyrs.

Sukhmani is the great Guru's Book of Poems. They are psalms of peace, spiritual peace. They sum up the whole teaching

of the ten Gurus. They have for these four centuries and more, consoled the hearts of men and women. They have healed; they have taught; they have illumined; they have been chanted day and by night. I know of men and women who have lived on them. They have entered into the lives of thousands. I have heard the chant in the midnight and again in the dawn. The psalms of *Sukhmani* are on the lips of the peasants in the field and the labourers in the factory, of the students in the school, the youths in the city, the bereaved and the broken. They have been food and nourishment of many hearts. In them is the great word of the Gurus, the Word of God. The Word has nourished the hearts of millions.

The very first Canto of the Book opens with the words:

"Meditate, meditate, meditate on Him and attain to *sukha*."

What is *sukha*? The *Upanishad* used the word *ananda*. Both mean "joy", "bliss". Both point to peace. All of us seek peace, joy, bliss. Even those who say they do not believe in God, seek *sukham*, peace. And what must they do to find *sukham*? They must "meditate" in silence; only so may they have an experience of peace in His presence.

Life is a search for peace, for *sukham*. All pain born of *Parkirti* (the body), all matter born suffering vanishes when you meditate on the One. Conquer *prakirti* to attain *sukham*. Conquer *prakirti* and enter into the Spirit, the One *Nama*. This entrance into *Nama* does not mean that you renounce the world. No! In meditating on the *Nama*, the spirit you rather understand the world better.

He was a farmer. He worked in the field by day: on his lips was *Nama*. Who realised better than he the value, the dignity and nobility of manual labour? "Labour" he said, "is worship!" And in all his work, he worshipped God. And his face glowed with beauty. Does not *Sukhmani* say, "He who remembers God wears a face kindled with beauty?"

Such a man, indeed is full of love. He will not argue about spirituality. He realises that life is meant for love of God. Through love, *bhakti*, he mounts to knowledge. The farmer, I referred to, seldom talked of God. He never argued. He reflected love in his actions. He chanted the Name of God,

he chanted *slokas* from *santbani*. And his very silence was a chant of the holy Name. He worked, he did his duty, each day, and every fragment of his work reflected love. And seeing him, I said: "this poor, humble peasant shows how work may become a prayer, a link of our hearts and minds with the Presence of the Living God". Here was a single man of meditation, who did not merely say prayers, he lived prayers, he was prayer personified! This farmer tilled the soul and his tilling was service of God.

Some passages from the psalms of the *Sukhmani*, I have sung, again and again and have felt that a wonder has suddenly opened and through the song of the *Sukhmani*, I have gazed at His Face. The *pauris* of the *Sukhmani* have proved to be steps to contemplation, steps on which I have ascended to receive free gifts of God, His revelation. Let me but chant the *pauris* in faith; and each *pauri* becomes a window through which He is beholden in a form of beauty. This beholding is the end of *simaran*. I meditate in order to see, to contemplate. And seeing I go forth into the valley of the shadow, the valley of *maya*, of action to serve the Will Divine.

The *Sukhmani* is the scripture of a saint whose sanctity entered into conflict with a king, proud of power and domination. The conflict ended in tragedy, the saint sacrificed his life and would not surrender God and the *Granth Sahib*. The great king Akbar, paid homage to the *Granth*, saying that it was full of praises for the Divine Maker and as a mark of his appreciation, sent several golden *mohars* to be spent in the service of the people. Akbar died in 1605. Akbar was succeeded by Jehangir, who did not understand the noble ideals for which Guru Arjan and the *Granth Sahib* stood.

The *Granth Sahib* is Scripture of Union, a *melap-sastra*. In it are brought together sayings and songs of Hindu and Muslim lovers of God. Jehangir asked Guru Arjan to make changes in the *Granth*. Guru Arjan declined to do anything to suit the fancies of a king and was summoned to Lahore. There he was ordered to sit for three days in a cauldron of boiling water which became hotter and hotter, as the flames underneath burnt, more and more, and red hot powder of sand was applied to the Guru's blistered body. In calm dignity set the Guru, reciting from the *Japji* and repeating the words:

"Sweet to me is what Thou doest!"

I but ask of Thee the Treasure of the Name.

The Grandeur And Strength Of Sikh Religion

By : Lt. Col. J.S. Gularia (Retd.)

Sikhism is a distinct faith. It is rooted in the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib. It differs in concept and practice from Hinduism and Islam. It is an original faith. It is a new revelation. The ceremonies performed by the Sikhs on the various occasions clearly give it a distinct entity.

Sikhism has a new organic growth and a distinct system of thought. Discipleship is one of its most important aspects. The Guru is needed for all times for making the disciple perfect. In *Asa Di Var*, the founder of the Sikh religion emphasises the importance of the Guru in the following words :

"If one meet the true Guru,
the mind stops wandering,

A stream of bliss flows in
one's being.

Spontaneous divine music
pours forth and a fearless
spiritual state is attained,

One remains detached from
worldliness and in one's
own self is God realised.

The Guru is like a river with
waters always clean,

When you meet him, all dirt
is washed away from the
sick heart.

The true Guru gives us a
perfect bath,

He turns brutes and demons
into angels and Gods.

When God sends his saving
grace to man,

state of realisation through the
Guru's grace. Gur Prasad i.e.
by the Guru's Grace, one can
realise the Lord. A Guru is a
spiritual enlightener. It is not
possible to keep to the right
and virtuous path without the
help of a true Guru.

God Himself place (the word)
in the heart of the Guru
Who proclaimed it outwardly.
(Asa War 6)

Wisdom is attained through
complete surrender to the Guru.
Salvation is possible only with
the guidance of the Guru.
A meeting with a true Guru
develops in us sense of discrim-
ination, love of humanity,
keeps us away from vice,
inculcates in us true wisdom
and understanding and provides
a proper basis for our personality.
The knowledge of the self can
be gained only through the
blessings and the guidance of the
Guru :

Love springs not (in the
heart)

Without the Guru

and the dirt of egoism is
washed not

when penetrating through
the word,

One knows the self he
becomes sure

That He is real basis of his
personality.

The self is known through the
Guru

**Sikhism has a new organic growth
and a distinct system of thought. It
is rooted in the teachings of Guru
Granth Sahib.**

He begins to practise the
word of Guru.

Says Nanak, hear ye all,
This is the way to cure the
disease.

One may read cartloads of
books, with caravan loads
to follow,

Yet Nanak, there is one
truth that matters.

All else is vanity and vexation
of the egoistic mind."

A Sikh is enjoined to follow
the teachings of the Great Gurus
as reposit in the Holy Granth
Sahib. It is by adherence to
these teachings that a Sikh
can reach to the highest point
of development of his personality
and become a dynamic power
in himself. A disciple truly
following the teachings of the
Gurus can attain to a state of
perfection. A Sikh attains to a

all other attempts are of no
avail.

(Sri Rag Asa 9—11)

The significance of a Guru in
the Sikh religion is great.
Even the founder of the Sikh
religion got his cup of Nam
from the Divine Court. Guru
Nanak refers to this experience
in his hymns :

There is no distance between
us. I am one with Him,

the reality immaculate, the
light of all

Nanak : I met the Guru,
the Supreme Lord, the
Supreme

Brahman, who is higher than
the highest.

(Sorath 5—11)

I met the True Guru, the
author of the whole
creation

Reflecting in his works

I put my faith in Him.

(Ramkali 14-8)

In Siri Rag (3.9) the God
is compared to a beautiful place
which is full of rubies and
jewels, pearls and pure diamonds.
He is like a fort of gold. The
human heart yearns to climb
into this fort to have a look
inside. It is not possible to
climb the fort without a ladder.
This ladder is the Guru who
can help us to have a view of
the fort :

Guru is the ladder, Guru the
boat, and Guru the raft,
laden with the Name of Hari
Guru is the ship to ferry us
across the sea of sansara.

Guru is the sacred place on
the bank of the ever-
flowing river.

If the Lord wills, the soul
goes to bathe in the
pool of truth and become
pure.

The true Guru thus keeps us
on the right path—the path that
ultimately leads to emancipation.
Every true Sikh proclaim his
absolute allegiance to the Guru's
teachings contained in Guru
Granth Sahib. In every Gurd-
wara, the Sikhs stand up for
their daily prayer and reaffirm the
declaration :

*Agya Bhaiy Akal ki tabbi
chalaayo Panth;*

*Sab Sikhian ko hukam hai
Guru maanyo Granth;*

*Guru Granth ji maanyo pargat
Guran ki deh;*

*Jaka hirda sudh hai khoj
shabad main lih;*

*Raj karega Khalsa, aaki rahe
na koe,*

*Khwaar hoe sab millenge,
bachhe sharan jo hoe.*

"God ordained the creation
of the path of Khalsa; all
followers are commanded
to accept Guru Granth
Sahib as their guide; Guru
Granth Sahib is the mani-
fest body of their Teacher;
A pure mind will find
His guidance in the word;
Khalsa, the pure will
rule, the impure will be
doomed, They, in disgust,
will rejoin the pure
ultimately and be saved."

(History of the Punjab—
Narang and Gupta p. 323)

The above verses portray the
tradition which has endured
for centuries. They reflect the
aspiration and determination
of the pure, the triumph of the
truth over falsehood and the
conquest of the pure over the
impure.

The Guru must always
reside in our heart and guide
all our thoughts and actions.
The Guru is our spiritual
enlightener. He alone can make
us realise the Lord. He alone
can save us from punishment.
He alone can redeem us. He
alone can turn us into true and
faithful believers. He alone can
make us worthy followers of
this great religion. He alone
can lead us from darkness into
light; from ignorance into
knowledge; from despair into
hope, from veracity into humi-
lity, from hatred into love,
from blindness into awareness,
from weakness into strength
and from countless deaths into
immortality. Such is the power
and importance of the Guru
according to the religious
precepts of the Sikhs.

The Sikh religion lays special
stress on prayer. The Sikh prayer
Japji embodies the essence of the
philosophy of Guru Nanak
(1469—1539), founder of the
Sikh faith. It is a composition of
Guru Nanak. It is the first
chapter of the Granth Sahib,
the Sikh scripture, *Japji* is the
morning prayer. It is meant to
be recited daily. This daily
prayer reminds the followers of
the Sikh faith, the fundamental
concepts of their religion, namely
the conception of God, the place
of the religious preceptor, the im-
portance of prayer, a belief in the
triumph of right over wrong,
of transmigration of soul, of
life hereafter and ultimate salva-
tion. The Sikh prayer *Japji*
occupies a place of primacy
in the Sikh religious precepts.
Its recitation and contemplation
on its philosophic content is
obligatory on all Sikhs in the
early morning 'amrit-vela'—the
ambrosial hour. This is stated
in Stanza IV of the *Japji* :

"What then in offering shall
we bring

That we may see His court
above ?

What then shall we say in
speech

That hearing may evoke His
love,

In the ambrosial hours of
fragrant dawn

On truth and greatness ponder
in meditation."

It is a complete and compre-
hensive prayer. It holds the key
to the basic religious philosophy
of the Sikh religion. It carries in
it the essence of the Sikh spiritual
thought. It is set down in words
which move, inspire and illumine

The greatest and the strongest point of the Sikh religion is that in place of abstract philosophical speculations, it gives to us the clarified religious consciousness.

the human mind. It is the inspired word of Guru Nanak's God-consciousness. It is a moral instruction. Its recitation dispels spiritual darkness and gives spiritual solace and peace of the mind. Its inspired idealism gives life nobility of thought so that it may preserve itself from ignoble decay. It enables man to wear burden of the day, exposed to the rain and sun and winds so that he may by reciting the prayer every day, enrich his mind, heart and soul. Since *Japji* is to be recited in the early hours of the dawn, the devoted must rise before the dawn, light the little lamp within by the power of the prayer so that he may prepare himself for a day of ceaseless fatigue. This prayer shows him the true path by following which he may not only gain a little bread with which to feed himself and his children but also to hold his communion with the creator. The prayer gives us our repose, removes our troubles and lightens our burdens. The prayer helps us to rise above more material goods. It goads us to place our affections in the true God. Truly understood and sincerely practised, the recitation of *Japji* makes all Sikhs the soldiers of His glory. Prayer is power as it revives joy in all disconsolate hearts. It reveals the cosmic order of things that cannot be grasped by human intellect or expressed in words. It gives guidance for moral conduct of life. It reveals the difference between the world of appearances and true existence. The prayer helps to instil in us a mystical faith in the unity of the pure Being. The prayer tells us by absorbing of holy teaching, man is immunised from death. A state of eternal bliss opens before us and we pass beyond the sphere of sin and sorrow.

By absorbing holy teaching
The seeker may enter into
the supreme state of
enlightenment and holiness
To one absorbing holy teaching
Shall be revealed the cosmic
-esoteric mysteries of the
earth,
The bull and sky,
The continents of the earth,
And its various realms and
the nether regions.
Absorbing of holy teaching

Makes man immune from
death.
Saint Nanak; God's devotees
are ever in bliss;
Absorbing holy teachings
annuls sorrow and sin.
(*Japji Pauri VIII*)

The prayer enables us to live in the proximity of God, gives us a new awareness of our being and its true nature, our obligations towards fellow beings and of our final destination after life on this earth has been spent. It helps us to discover the first and right law of living. It awakens our soul and gives us conscience. It reveals to us a scale of values which ought to govern our lives. *Japji*, the prayer of the Sikhs, has a completeness which is unrivalled and priceless. In fact, it is a code of moral conduct which can be neglected only at the peril of self annihilation and eternal dawn of our souls!

The Sikhs do not believe in sacred rivers or mountains nor do they worship any stone images. It is enjoined on the Sikhs to worship only the Truth. They are forbidden from worshipping an idol. The Sikhism rejects the theory of God's incarnation by characterising Him as Unborn. Before the advent of Guru Nanak, many of the supporters of Bhakti met worshipped Shiva, Rama and

Krishna, considering them as incarnations of God and the worship of their image was considered by them as a means of winning His pleasure. This view was rejected by Guru Nanak. He clearly proclaimed that His God was Unborn and therefore, no image of His can be made. He gave this concept of God in the *Mul Mantra* :

There is one God
He, the Creator
Is without fear and without
hate.
He, the omnipresent.
In fact, according to the Sikh
belief :
Pervades the universe.
He is not born,
Nor does He die to be born
again
By His Grace shalt thou
worship Him,
Before time itself.
There was truth,
When Time began to run
its course.
He was the truth.
Even now, He is the truth
and
Ever more shall truth prevail.
(Nanak)

The concept of God as given by Guru Nanak is most rational and scientific. This concept places God beyond all limitations of human thought. God is infinite; that is, His existence and attributes are without limit, transcend all our powers of apprehension. We know nothing that can be added to them. The human mind can form no adequate apprehension of the infinite, God's wisdom is infinite and it transcends all our powers of expression. We can only praise His Majesty and glory and try to reach Him by traversing the path shown to us by the Gurus.

Inner Devotion To God

With the coming of spring,
The whole vegetation blossoms
out,
In the same way,
With the coming of inner, devo-
tion to God,
All sentient creatures have an
inner blossoming
And the mind becomes fresh &
green,
Day and night repeating the
Name of the Lord,
They wash away all egoism by
the Grace of the Guru.

—Guru Amar Das

The greatest and the strongest point of the Sikh religion is that in place of abstract philosophical speculations, it gives to us the clarified religious consciousness. It is a practical religion, the practice of which leads to intimate harmonising of God and Man, their communion in the relation of child to man, is embodied in the idea of a God-made man. The distance between God and man stands eliminated. Man is one with him. Herein lies the grandeur and strength of the Sikh religion. This union with God is achieved through *Simran* which means singing God's Name and through it getting attuned to Him. It is a mystical experience.

They who are attuned to Thee
in a ceaseless trance,
dwell on nothing but Thy
word

For them there is no earth
nor water nor sky, and all
that is,
Is the Lord's name.

Nourishment in every drop!

For lustrous growth of my hair
I use Keo-Karpin every day.
Gently perfumed, non-sticky
Keo-Karpin is so light.....
yet so nourishing!

Keo-Karpin
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How To Curb Embezzlement Of Welfare Funds

By : N.S. Saksena

The Union government has appointed a high-powered body to check whether various fiscal benefits meant for weaker sections are really reaching them. The only valid criticism against this move can be that it is several years too late and crores of rupees, meant for the poor, have already been siphoned off by cheats, who belong to the stronger sections of society having political clout. The working of co-operative societies, for instance, clearly shows how dishonest local politicians in league with equally dishonest low-level bureaucrats are depriving the poor of vast funds earmarked for their benefit.

In 1971 the U.P. government created a special cell in the CID to deal with embezzlement in co-operative societies. During nearly eight years of its existence, this cell has registered about 6,000 cases, investigated about 5,000 cases and sent about 3,500 cases to the courts. The accused are mainly cashiers of co-operative banks, supervisors, accountants, assistant cooperative development officers, kurkamins, village level workers or managers, and secretaries of co-operative banks.

Though a large number of cases are still pending in the courts, hundreds of the accused officials have already been convicted. The investigations have revealed that an aggregate sum of nearly Rs. 11 crores has been embezzled. Indeed, nearly, Rs. three crores has already been recovered.

The way the cheats operate is truly brazen. The illiterate peasants are made to put their thumb impressions on blank paper and the loan is drawn and shared by sarpanchas, accountants, supervisors or others. The majority of the accused have political influence and it is to the credit of the U.P. CID that it has not succumbed to pressures.

Things are no better in other states. The Haryana co-operative minister, Mr Virendra Singh, disclosed in October, 1977, that a drive had been launched to recover the funds embezzled from co-operative societies and that a sum of Rs. 2.5 crores had been recovered. Last month the registrar of co-operative societies told the Press that as many as 2,000 cases were pending trial in courts or were being investigated by the police.

Embezzlement on such a large scale is not possible without official connivance and it is a poor consolation to be told that only eight government officials have been dismissed so far and that criminal cases have been registered against twelve others.

The minister for co-operatives in Punjab revealed in June, 1976 that 1,075 cases of embezzlements in co-operatives were detected and the total sum involved was about Rs. 5.5 crores. Two years later the state's co-operative minister, Sardar Jaswinder Singh Brar, said a special cell had detected embezzlements to the tune of Rs. 6 crores. He added that the main chunk of this money had gone to "big landlords and some influential persons".

Two years ago, the Rajasthan government decided to set up a special police cell for investigating cases of embezzlement in co-operative societies. Earlier, the Bihar government had decided to set up a commission to inquire into charges of misappropriation in co-operative societies. About the same time Sheikh Abdullah had announced his decision to set up a similar

commission headed by a high court judge, to inquire into embezzlements in co-operative stores. Though the results of these moves have not been fully documented, it is clear that the evil is widespread.

The reason was why only the tip of iceberg has been bated so far is not far to seek. The accounts of the co-operatives are seldom audited properly. The CID seldom has enough staff to investigate frauds. Besides a good deal of the money is misutilised or just wasted. Indeed, if an honest attempt is made to find out how precisely hundreds of crores of rupees meant for the relief of the poor in flood-affected and drought hit areas have been actually spent, the results would be truly shocking. Likewise, much of the plan provision for the welfare of the tribal people in the north-east or in south Bihar has gone into the pockets of corrupt officials and politicians.

The only effective remedy lies in creating special squads in all state CIDs and ruthlessly prosecuting the cheats and taking action against government servants. There is no reason to reach the cynical conclusion that the investigating agency may be equally corrupt. Unlike the general police, CID in a majority of the states, has a good reputation for integrity and efficiency. Indeed, its record in Uttar Pradesh would please even the most cynical of sceptics.

DELAY IN DISPENSATION OF JUSTICE MUST END : JURISTS

Eminent jurists have called for early steps to end delays in dispensation of justice which were shaking the confidence of the people in the prevalent judicial system.

Participating in a discussion on "judicial reforms" with reference to law delays, the jurists made three important suggestions to cut down these delays. First, setting up of conciliation boards for settling disputes to ensure that lesser number of cases went to the court. Second, increasing the number of courts to cope with mounting arrears of cases. And lastly to streamline the procedures in administration of justice.

Initiating the discussion, Mr V.M. Tarkunde suggested appointment of ad hoc judges from the bar for clearing the backlog of cases. At the expiry of their ad hoc appointment, such judges should be allowed to practise in the courts where they had served as ad hoc judges to ensure they were willing to

take up short-term appointments as presiding officers of the courts, he suggested, Mr Tarkunde was, however, opposed to the appointment of retired judges as ad hoc judges.

He felt the right type of people were not willing to leave the bar and join the bench because service conditions and remunerations of the presiding officers of the courts were not satisfactory.

Mr Tarkunde pointed out that large number of judicial posts remained vacant. Five high courts in the country today did not have regular chief justices. All this contributed to inefficiency and delays in dispensation of justice, he said.

He said that as delays in filling judicial posts occurred because of political reasons, there was need to evolve a system under which the appointment, promotion and transfer of judges should not depend upon the executive authority. Promotion

should be automatic on the basis of seniority, he felt.

Advocating a system of settlement of disputes without going to courts, Mr Tarkunde pleaded for a greater role for the Nyaya Panchayats in settling disputes through conciliation.

Another measure suggested by him was to provide for only one appeal against the judgement of a trial court. He said the writ petition should not be used to cure mistakes of law but should be entertained when interests of justice so demanded.

Mr M.C. Bhandare, an eminent lawyer, suggested setting up of an all-India judicial officers service at par with other all-India services. Members of this cadre should also be given proper training so that they could serve as efficient prosecutors and judicial officers.

He was, however, opposed to the appointment of ad hoc judges. Instead he wanted the judiciary to be strengthened by increasing the number of courts adequately.

Mr. Justice E.S. Venkataramiah

disagreed with both Mr Tarkunde and Mr Bhandare that the judges were getting inadequate remuneration and were feeling dissatisfied which reflected in their efficiency. He said, "The judge who is unhappy can quit". In his opinion the efficiency of the courts could improve if the lawyers cooperated and did not raise frivolous pleas and ask for adjournments. They should also ensure that witnesses who came to the courts were examined and the cases proceeded.

Mr Justice S. Murtaza Fazal Ali wanted appointment of more judges and said that the problem of law delays be dealt with as a national problem. He suggested a small change in the civil procedure code, which, he claimed, would help save a lot of time of the courts and litigents. The change proposed by him was that both the plaintiff and the respondent should be made to declare before the court in their pleadings their legal heirs so that in the event of death of the either party, they were substituted automatically and the case progressed.

The discussion was organised by the Delhi Study Group.

Letters To The Editor

Indian Workers In Iraq

Sir,—Those of us who have been to the Gulf states and especially to Iraq know very well how our Indians are working hand-in-hand with their Iraqi brothers and the salaries they receive in this friendly nation are beyond one's imagination—it is more than 100 rupees a day for an ordinary worker.

Meanwhile, oil rich Iraq is exploring the possibilities of engaging more Indians in development works in industry, construction, agriculture and irrigation. Iraqi Minister Bakr Mahomound Rassol has a good word for the performance of Indian labour, while the Minister of Industry and Minerals, Mr. Mohammed Ayesb Hamad is full of praise for the work done by Indian technicians. He says that there are about 300 personnel in his ministry alone.

He said the number would soon rise to 1000 after the personnel selected by an Iraqi delegation during its recent Indian visit starts working in the Republic of Iraq.

—Miss Manjeet Kaur
Delhi.

Pension Rules

Sir,—Soldiers retire from service between the age of 40 and 50 depending upon their rank and very few of them succeed in getting absorbed in civilian offices. On re-employment, their pension is adjusted against the entitled pay. According to rules, a pension amount of Rs. 50 to

Rs. 125 of a re-employed person is protected, subject to the date of absorption in the civil service. The rule regarding the protection of Rs. 50 was introduced in 1964.

As a result of the Third Pay Commission's recommendations the revised pay scales and pension rates were introduced with effect from January 1, 1973. Later, the pension protection amount was also revised from Rs. 50 to Rs. 125 with effect from July 19, 1978 with one snag. The pensioners who retired and were re-employed before that date could take the benefit of the enhanced protection, but they would be considered as fresh appointees compelling them to lose their seniority as well as the increments earned by them during the last years.

It would have been fair if this enhanced rate of pension protection had been given retrospective effect from January 1, 1973 i.e. the date on which new scales were introduced. If however, this is not possible, let the pension protection of Rs. 125 be given to all the re-employed pensioners who were/are in service before/on July 19, 1978 but without making them suffer financially by treating them as fresh appointees. The proposal, if accepted by the government, will go a long way to boost the morale of the defence services.

—Col. Harbans Singh
(Retd.)

Naya Nangal.

Funds Collection For Poor And Weaker Section



Sardar Ranjit Singh Johar, Editor, *Ranjit Weekly*, Bombay through his publication, collected Rs. 1,35,000 and handed over the cheque to Sardar Mohan Singh Sahani, President, Guru Nanak Mission Backward Classes Welfare Trust last week in a big cosmopolitan gathering. These funds will be utilised for opening schools, sanitary blocks, dispensaries in selected village blocks of Maharashtra for the benefit of the backward and economically weaker classes.

Punjab Chemi-Plants Bags Iraqi Contract

Ninth June, 1980 was a big day for Sardar H.S. Mejie, Managing Director of Punjab Chemi-Plants Ltd., Chandigarh, as on that day he signed a contract at Basrah for the construction of a big housing complex on trunkway basis involving an expenditure of 45.00 million Iraqi Dinars (equivalent to approximately Rs. 134.00 crores). Mr. Mejie deserves congratulations for securing this project in spite of tough global competition. From a modest beginning under his able guidance Punjab Chemi-Plants matches best of the international standard.

Due to inspiring leadership of Sardar Mejie, Punjab Chemi-Plants has constructed Power Plants, Fertiliser Plants, Coal Handling Systems, Sugar Mills which need special building technology. Besides many more stupendous building and construction work owe their present splendour, durability and utility to the building genius of Sardar H.S. Mejie under whose supervision, Punjab Chemi-Plants is operating in the Middle East for the last many years and have completed successfully portion of the job allotted to it in the prestigious Ardiya Housing Projects in Kuwait where the Engineering Projects (India) Ltd. is the main contractor.

It has also completed the project of Water Supply in Kuwait for M/s Bovis International and another project of construction of school, Mosque and Shopping Centre is in final stages of completion. In Iraq, it is already executing a Housing Project costing Rs. 30 crores at Diwaniah. Punjab Chemi-Plants Ltd. is also entering the International market in the turnkey projects in association with European Associates in the field of Power Projects, Desalination Plants, Cements, Fertiliser and other such industrial projects and total commitments of the Company in International Market is estimated to be over Rs. 200 crores.

After negotiating successfully a building contract in Iraq as a joint venture along with M/s Hindustan Steel Works Construction Ltd. for the construction of 2269 dwelling houses and

ancillary Buildings including infra-structural facilities at the Iraqi Ports of Magal, Khor-Al-Zubion, Um Kasar and Fao. Sardar Mejie is now busy in mobilising his energy and resources for the completion of this time-bound project.

For this Housing complex Sardar Mejie has decided to use modern concept of industrialised construction adopting modern system and for this purpose he has associated M/s Larsen and Nelson Group of Denmark, who are one of the pioneers in precast fabrication and will supply the specialised equipment and technology. The project is to be completed in a period of 36 months, and will provide employment to 2500 technical personnel from India.

The Indian Joint Venture is a formidable combination which has taken shape on the Indian Sub-continent. M/s Hindustan Steel Works Construction Ltd. is the largest construction company of India, a Government of India Undertaking with a record of timely execution of projects covering a wide field from giants like integrated steel plants to sophisticated projects and townships including construction of Power Projects, Mining Ports, Dams, Bridges etc. In the International market, M/s Hindustan Steel Works Construction Ltd. is executing projects of a broad spectrum of Construction activities. Besides HSCL is negotiating projects in the field of turnkey construction of steel plants and other ventures in association with foreign companies in Africa and Middle East.

The formation of a joint venture of these two Companies has brought to the construction scene of Middle East a very powerful and effective instrument which has a pool of experience, organisational depth and administrative efficiency backed by the latest know-how in the field of modern construction. The pioneering of this Joint Venture of a Public Sector Undertaking of Punjab Government will be a trend setter for fresh pastures in the highly competitive and demanding field in overseas market.

—Prof. G.S. Randhir

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Sugar-Alcohol-Paper Complexes Beneficial

Sikh Scientist's Vital Contribution

"With the crude prices increasing every few months, it is time to look for alternative feedstocks", says Dr. G.S. Siddhu, Director, Regional Research Laboratory, Hyderabad. With no assured supply of crude, interest had been revived in coal gasification technologies and special research. Dr. Siddhu feels that it is essential to make large investments in this field.

The low temperature carbonisation industry, which could be set up indigenously, yields valuable liquid byproducts. Methanol is a chemical with a great potential. Dr. Siddhu is keenly interested in the utilisation of the by-products. He is working on gasification of coal so that gas could be developed into chemicals.

Since processes burning oil released carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and those burning coal much more so environmental problems were bound to arise. Dr. Siddhu stresses the need to turn attention to renewable green plants as a source of fuel. He also advises utilising

biomass, especially agricultural and municipal wastes.

Dr. Siddhu feels there is a wide industrial base for the manufacture of commodity chemicals and derived speciality chemicals. He points out that the turnover of BASF, a German company, is nearly as much as that of our whole country in commodity and specially chemicals. Since a major product cost factor was feedstock, the energy consumption factor was becoming increasingly important. He advocates locating plants nearer the source of feedstock and using feedstocks which are indigenously available.

Quite a number of chemicals

can be manufactured from ethanol (ethyl-alcohol) which is now produced in the country totally by the fermentation of sugarcane molasses. From the molasses now produced, an additional 1,60,000 tonnes of ethanol could be manufactured every year.

Stressing the advantages of developing integrated sugar alcohol paper complexes, Dr. Siddhu says that 1.2 million tonnes of paper could be produced from the surplus bagasse in the country after meeting the energy needs. "Paper plants have to seek bamboo nearly 800 kms away, transport it to the factory and after manufacturing paper transport it again to long distances. Instead, he suggests economically viable small paper plants to produce two to three tonnes of paper. Plant and machinery for the paper mills could be made in the country utilising locally available vegetable matter, like straw and bagasse.

Dr. Siddhu who was awarded Padma Shri in 1976 was named the winner of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry award in 1975 for the individual scientist who promotes "technology with particular reference to its interaction with industry".

In 1966, Dr. Siddhu was awarded the K.G. Naik Gold Medal for his contributions which "found application or were likely to be used in the developing Indian industries". He has shown particular interest in industrial organic intermediates, drugs and pharmaceuticals, pesticides and wood chemistry.

Dr. Siddhu says "after a gap of several years, we have discovered a new drug". It is an anti-inflammatory drug to reduce swelling. It is to be commercially produced by a Bombay firm.



Dr. G.S. Siddhu, born on 4th July, 1920 in Punjab, was brought up and educated at Lucknow (Ph.D. Organic Chemistry). He worked as a Senior Staff Instructor in the Civil Defence Staff School at Lucknow (1941-1944) and taught chemistry at the Shia College and at the University of Lucknow.

He then joined the Central Laboratories for Scientific and Industrial Research as Scientific Officer in 1949. This laboratory was taken over by the CSIR in 1956 and renamed as the Regional Research Laboratory, Hyderabad. Dr. Siddhu has been the Director of this laboratory since 1962. He was also the member of the Governing Body of the CSIR from 1975 to 1977. He is on the Board of Directors of some companies as a nominee of the Government and has also been a member of the Development Council for Organic Chemical Industries and for Paper Pulp and Allied Industries.

He is associated with several universities in India and is a Fellow/Member of many learned bodies both in India and abroad.

Dr. Siddhu has published several research papers and also has several patents to his credit.

Iranian Ambassador Visits PAU

Dr. Abolfazeal Mogtehdi, Ambassador of Iran in India visited the Punjab Agricultural University Ludhiana to press for the admission of a larger number of Iranian students to the PAU "in view of this being an exceptional year for Iran". There are 50 Iranian students in the University including some girls who are studying agricultural engineering.

The Vice-Chancellor Dr. Amrik Singh Cheema told the Ambassador that while in other agricultural universities the number of foreign students was on 10 per cent of the total student strength, in PAU it was already 20 per cent. The Ambassador said the Indian students had a great preference for this University. The Vice-Chancellor agreed to consider more cases for admission.

The Ambassador met the Iranian students and also acquainted himself with the research work of the University.

Voluntary Repatriation Of Asian Immigrants Suggested

At a time when the immigrants are under considerable pressure because of widespread unemployment, another danger signal appears to have been hoisted in the shape of a demand made by the right-wing paper "The Daily Telegraph" that the government should assist voluntary repatriation.

This type of demand has been made in the past by fringe politicians and organisations, and nobody paid much attention to it. But this is the first time that it has been voiced by a responsible paper which is known for its influence in large sections of the Conservative party and even nationally.

It is notable that "The Daily Telegraph" accounts for over half of the circulation of the four national dailies—the other three

being "The Times", "The Guardian" and "The Financial Times".

It has unquestioned influence in Tory circles. There are instances of the Conservative party having reversed its stand on some issues when "The Daily Telegraph" took a line diametrically opposed to that of the government. A fairly recent example was the government's volte face on the question of allowing boat people from Vietnam into Britain. Mrs Thatcher had initially opposed their entry, but beat a hasty retreat when the paper strongly supported the plea for granting the asylum in Britain.

The demand for voluntary repatriation should be viewed in the context of the paper's unquestioned influence. Although

it is couched in rather moderate language, the whole intent and purposes is unmistakable. Commenting editorially on the recent assurance by Mr William Whitelaw, the home secretary, to the immigrants that the government was committed to racial equality, the paper said today that "he had nothing to assuage the legitimate fears of white people and in particular nothing to suggest that the government any longer takes seriously its commitment to assist genuinely voluntary repatriation".

The timing of the demand is significant. As more and more people are laid off as a result of the government's economic policies, immigrants tend to become scapegoats for the failure of the British economy. The charge is being levelled against them that they are responsible for throwing white people out of work.

In the dust raised by the

controversy, it is conveniently forgotten by those prejudiced against the immigrants that the worst sufferers are Britain's ethnic minorities. In the north-west region of the country, one out of every two immigrants is out of job. The national figure is one out of every four.

The demand made by "The Daily Telegraph" is the thin end of the wedge. Since unemployment is generally expected to increase in the coming winter even by the government, the demand is likely to gather force and content.

Another factor which is expected to lend an edge to this demand, which in less responsible circles could become a plea for general repatriation, is the anticipated white paper on nationality laws. Already many Conservative MPs are openly demanding that all further immigration, including the dependents of the families already here, should be stopped.

Remittances From Abroad Raise Punjab Rural Standard

Remittances from people who have migrated from Punjab help in raising the income as well as the standards of living of rural households in the state, according to a study carried out by the International Labour Organisation in collaboration with the department of economics of Punjab University here.

The study, which was conducted by an ILO expert, Dr. A.S. Oberai, and the head of the economics department of Punjabi University, Dr H.K. Manmohan Singh, relates to the effects of migration and remittances on rural development.

It says that a large number of households receiving remittances use them for productive investment. This is particularly true of agricultural families which have investment opportunities in rural areas. The remittances also serve to redistribute incomes between rural and urban areas. Moreover the huge transfer of resources from urban areas has a large potential for strengthening the rural economy.

The report suggests that the growing volume of remittances and their positive impact on rural areas should not be overlooked when population redistribution policies are formulated. There is a need to provide investment opportunities to families which do not own agricultural land or enterprises, so that the remittances they receive may be used profitably.

Based on a rural household survey carried out by ILO in Ludhiana district, the team investigated the nature and role of remittances in rural development. A number of other questions were examined. For example, which types of migrants are more likely to send remittances? And what are the remittances used for?

The field survey covered 2,124 households (13,058 persons). Of these, 504 had at least one "out-migrant" each, 327 had one "in-migrant" each and 137 at least one "returned migrant" each. Some households had more than one category of migrants. The number of households that had no migrant was 1,228.

For purposes of the study, an "out-migrant", was defined as a person who had previously been a member of the household but had left since 1961 to live or work elsewhere. The survey identified 1,646 such persons. Of these, 949 were women, who migrated after marriage, and children below 12 years of age. No detailed information was collected concerning them and

they were, therefore, excluded from the subsequent analysis.

The data collected during the survey revealed that while nearly all husbands who migrated sent remittances, only half of those classified as children did so. Parents and grandchildren also sent remittances, but their number was relatively small. Married migrants (two-thirds of the total) were more likely to send remittances than the unmarried ones.

Artisans and other migrants belonging to lower castes sent more remittances than agriculturists and migrants belonging to higher castes. This may be due to the fact that former are in the low income group and their households are in greater need of remittances to meet expenses.

Distance does not appear to loosen family ties. On the contrary, a large percentage of those who have migrated from state have sent remittances.

The data highlights the fact that it takes about three years for a majority of migrants to feel settled and start sending remittances. But on the whole, the analysis shows that once the migrants start sending remittances, they continue to do so regularly. The proportion of those sending remittances does not decline with the period they have been away. There is thus no evidence (through remittances) to show that family ties weaken over a period.

Another significant finding of the study is the large transfer of resources to rural areas of

Ludhiana district. The total net transfer in a single year, estimated on the basis of remittances received from 374 persons who have migrated from the district since 1961, works out to about Rs. 3.6 crores. As much as 60.8 per cent of this amount comes from outside the state. Only a small part of the total net inflow (12.4 per cent) originates in rural areas. Interestingly there is a net outflow of over Rs. 10 lakhs per annum to rural areas of neighbouring states. This appears to be the result of transfers by farmers of Ludhiana district who have acquired interests in these states.

Referring to the main use of the remittances, the report says that more than 75 per cent of the households concerned spend the remittances on food and clothing and over 25 per cent on household items. The only other priority item is "ceremonies including weddings" (9.6 per cent), while only a small proportion of households (6.1 per cent) use the remittances for productive investment, much of it for the purchase of agricultural land, farm equipment and inputs like seeds, fertiliser and pesticides.

According to the study, the overall pattern of expenditure appears to be consumption-oriented. But this should not be interpreted as being mainly unproductive. In an economy in which the standard of living is low, consumption expenditure may often be functional and induce significant improvements in labour productivity.

Akali Patrika Editor Dead

Sardar Amar Singh Dosanjh, Chief Editor of Akali Patrika, died at Jullundur on July 22 following a heart attack. He was 65.

A former M.L.A. and the General Secretary of the Akali Dal, he is survived by his wife, three sons and two daughters.

The Punjab Chief Minister, Sardar Darbara Singh, expressed his shock at the death of Sardar Dosanjh. He said Sardar Dosanjh was a great patriot.

His forthright and forcible comments on current Panthic affairs were greatly appreciated. He was a great thinker and expressed his views with clarity and considerable force.

Sardar Dosanjh was a man of noble heart and a deeply-devoted Sikh. Those, who came into contact with him, were inspired by his simple and loving personality. The Spokesman Weekly extend their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. May his soul rest at the Guru's feet.

SARDAR J.S. GREWAL PASSES AWAY

Sardar Jagjit Singh Grewal, former Chief Mining Engineer and General Manager of Raniganj Coal Association Ltd. expired at Chandigarh on 18th July, 1980 after a short illness. He was only 57 years old. He was a Fellow of Mining Engineers and Chartered Engineers (London) and also a Fellow of Institution of Engineers (India). Besides he was a Member of Committee of University Grants Commission, Joint Board of Mining Engineering and Coal Mines Labour-Welfare Fund Advisory Committee.

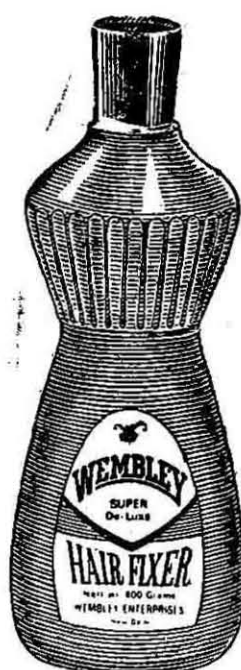
He was a great philanthropist and a social figure and took keen interest in various religious, cultural and social organisations.

He is survived by his wife, three daughters and one son.

A devout Sikh and a man of guts and courage, whose motto in life was simplicity and service. His sweet memory shall always be cherished by many whom he had rendered assistance and service, and provided them with much needed relief and inspiration. The "Spokesman Weekly" prays for eternal peace to the departed soul and offers sincere condolence to the bereaved family.

Stir To Continue Against C.B.I.

Leaders of the All-India Sikh Students Federation announced at Amritsar this week their decision to continue their agitation on the issue of the alleged harassment of Sikhs by the C.B.I. in the case of the Nirankari Baba murder case,



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